

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Atlanta event: Africa
and the fight to transform world

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 69/NO. 46

NOVEMBER 28, 2005

Copper workers in Southwest push back company concessions

Return to work confident after four-month strike

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

KEARNY, Arizona—Some 1,500 copper miners in Arizona and Texas overwhelmingly approved an agreement with Asarco November 13, ending a four-month strike that pushed back company concession demands. It was the first walkout in U.S. copper mines in 15 years.

“We forced Asarco to back off of all their take-back demands,” said Martha Sharp, a member of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 915 and a mill operator, as she picketed at the entrance of the Ray open pit mine here. “The company sought to cut our wages by \$4 to \$5 per hour, make huge cuts in medical coverage, do away with pensions for new hires, and freeze pension payments for the rest of us.”

Strikers returned to work at the five Arizona sites and one Texas site November 16 under an existing contract that has been extended until Dec. 31,

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AP/John Miller

Members of United Steelworkers and other striking unions picket Asarco's facilities near Hayden, Arizona, July 8. The 1,500 workers returned to work November 16 after pushing back proposed cuts in wages, pensions, and health-care coverage.

International book fair opens in Caracas as gov't declares Venezuela free of illiteracy

BY RÓGER CALERO

CARACAS, Venezuela—The First Venezuela International Book Fair opened here November 11 under the theme, “The Caribbean: a bridge of books, a sea of humanity.” Thousands browsed through at exhibits by publishers from 25 countries in the Americas.

The fair is taking place on the heels of a government announcement that Venezuela is free of illiteracy, after a two-and-a-half-year literacy cam-

paign known as Mission Robinson.

The fair is being held at the popular Parque del Este (Eastern Park), near Petare, one of the largest working-class neighborhoods in Caracas. “This is an event that seeks to give the largest number of people the benefit of efforts to democratize access to books and reading material,” said Thady Carabaño, a fair organizer.

Ramón Medero, president of Venezuela's National Book Center, which

organizes the fair, said the event is not an isolated affair but is part of efforts to promote new writers and increase the production and distribution of books throughout the country. At a press conference before the fair's opening, Medero announced the purchase of a new print shop by the Ministry of Culture. He also said the government has built 23 new bookstores this year—in addition to the 10 built last year—in order to distribute a range of titles by Venezuelan and other publishers.

While the fair has been held annually for many years, it is becoming a truly international event for the first time, organizers said. Publishers from 25 countries are taking part this time, compared to 11 last year. More than 100 Venezuelan exhibitors are present too, while 89 took part in 2004.

Extending literacy and the country's cultural level is part of the fair's goal. In July 2003, the government headed by President Hugo Chávez launched Mission Robinson, a literacy campaign throughout Venezuela, among other social programs. The aim was to teach basic reading, writing, and arithmetic to more than 1.5 million people, about 12 percent of adults in the population of 24 million. The government now says this goal has been reached.

Mission Robinson was launched with substantial help from the government of Cuba, which donated tens of thousands of television sets, VCRs, videotapes, and printed materials used in the classes. In addition, dozens of

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In final stretch, ‘Militant’ readers on a roll to sell over 3,000 subscriptions

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Militant readers are on a roll in winning new subscribers. Nearly 400 people signed up last week. It was the best result since the first week of the circulation drive, when 500 people subscribed. With such momentum the 3,000 goal can be surpassed.

The response the *Militant* is getting reflects an increase in combativity among working people resisting attacks by the bosses on their pay, job conditions, and living standards.

“The number of work stoppages in the U.S., including strikes by unions and management-sponsored lockouts, is on the upswing as tensions rise between workers and companies that are seeking to cut wages and benefits,” reported the November 15 *Wall Street Journal*. The big-business daily noted that strikes have increased by 14 percent this year compared to last.

The bulk of subscriptions last week were sold at picket lines, union rallies, factory gates, and door-to-door sales in working-class districts. Below are a few of the many examples readers reported.

“In a two-day weekend effort, supporters of the *Militant* from Des Moines, Omaha, and the Twin Cities reached out to packinghouse and other workers in Nebraska and Iowa, winning 42 new readers to the paper,” Mary Martin from Des Moines reported November 14. “One team covering the Dakota City and Sioux City area of Nebraska sold 29 subs, including to union workers at the Tyson and John Morrell plants in those cities. In Des Moines, we have now surpassed our 150 sub quota and plan to continue getting the press out every day to win new readers and help make

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French rulers clamp down on protests against racist discrimination

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The French government has clamped down on youth and working people of African descent protesting cop brutality and racist discrimination in jobs, housing, and education. On November 14, the French cabinet approved a bill extending for three months the state of emergency Paris had declared six days earlier. The National Assembly ratified the extension the following day in a 346–148 vote, and the Senate passed it November 16.

The government's repressive measures have had an impact. Protests have subsided substantially. The authorities have deployed some 9,500 cops—including the hated riot police, known as the CRS—to towns housing immigrants, largely from northern and sub-Saharan Africa. In Paris, 3,000 cops were mobilized November 12 to enforce a one-day ban on unauthor-

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Northwest Airlines targets Machinists union as striking mechanics hold firm

BY NELSON GONZALEZ

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Using outsourcing and job cuts, Northwest Airlines plans a sharp reduction in the number of ground workers at the carrier represented by the International Association of Machinists (IAM), the November 10 *Pioneer Press* reported. Of the remaining 7,800 jobs out of the current workforce of 14,600, the company would outsource the work of nearly 5,000 baggage handlers, customer service workers, and others.

The latest attacks come as mechanics and other workers who walked out in August hold firm on the picket lines.

The airline, which has filed for

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UN calls for an end to U.S. embargo on Cuba

BY PAUL PEDERSON

NEW YORK—For the 14th consecutive year, the United Nations General Assembly on November 8 approved a resolution calling for an end to the trade embargo Washington has maintained against Cuba since 1962.

Of the 191 member states, 182 voted yes. Only four voted against—Israel, the Marshall Islands, Palau, and the United States. Micronesia abstained. It was the largest majority yet voting for the resolution.

The embargo “is an economic war enforced with incomparable zeal on a global scale,” Cuban foreign minister Felipe Pérez Roque told the UN. “Never before, as in the last 18 months, has the blockade been enforced with so much viciousness and brutality.” Last year, Washington fined 316 U.S. citizens or residents for breaching provisions of the embargo, Pérez Roque said. With nearly two months to go, already 537 such fines have been levied this year. He cited dozens of examples of loss of trade due to this economic war. The Cuban government reports a total loss of \$82 billion since the sanctions began.

The foreign minister also cited the increasing restrictions by Washington on travel by U.S. citizens to the Caribbean island. These, he said, have caused visits to drop by 55 percent this year as compared to 2003. Travel by Cubans residing in the United States to their native country has also declined by nearly half, he added.

Representatives of 25 states spoke in favor of the resolution.

“Throughout Africa’s struggle for independence and liberation, we counted Cuba as one of our strongest

allies,” Tanzania’s ambassador Tuvako Manongi said. “The bonds forged in that struggle demand that we now stand with Cuba.”

The representative of St. Lucia, motivating the resolution on behalf of the Caribbean Community, praised the medical aid and scholarships given by Cuba to nations in the Caribbean.

“We challenged Castro to open the Cuban economy,” U.S. representative Ronald Godard said, the only one to speak against the resolution. The Cuban government should stop blocking “free market reforms,” he said.

The representative of the European Union, who said the EU voted for the resolution only because of the “extra-territorial” aspects of the embargo, aimed his fire at the Cuban government, claiming it violates “human rights.”

Cuban deputy ambassador Ileana Nuñez gave Cuba’s reply. The EU representative, she said, “seemed to apologize for being forced to recognize what is clear: that you can’t prevent people from choosing a form of society where the great benefits are not shared only among a few.”

Nuñez said Washington “attacks our people because they are a contagious example that they are afraid of.” Cuba, she said, “can learn nothing about human rights from the richest country in the world where 44 million people go without access to health care.”

“The march of the Cuban people is irreversible, in spite of imperialism and their acolytes,” Nuñez concluded. “In Cuba there is a true revolution, a popular revolution.” It has “consolidated the deepest feeling of solidarity amongst the peoples of the world.”

U.S. court sets back effort to free Cuban Five



Militant/Bernie Senter

Andrés Gómez, a leader of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, a Miami group that opposes the U.S. economic war against Cuba, speaks September 18 at a Miami meeting in solidarity with five Cuban revolutionaries jailed in the United States on frame-up charges of

conspiring to commit espionage for the Cuban government. On October 31, a federal appeals court threw out an earlier ruling by its three-judge panel that had overturned the 2001 convictions of the five—Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, René González, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González—and ordered a new trial. This setback means the Cuban Five will remain in prison. The full court will reconsider their appeal.

‘Intelligent design’ supporters trounced in Dover, PA, election

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

“Intelligent design will soon be history in Dover Area High School science classes,” stated a November 10 *Philadelphia Enquirer* article aptly titled “It’s a revolution for evolution.”

The article reported that voters in Dover, Pennsylvania, ousted all eight school board members who had backed teaching “intelligent design” in public schools along with evolution and replaced them November 8 with a slate of candidates supporting Darwin’s scientific theory.

“You just voted God out of your city,” fumed evangelist Pat Robertson November 10 on his television show “The 700 Club,” referring to the citizens of Dover. His remark reflected the frustration of rightist forces pushing “intelligent design”—a repackaged version of creationism and a thinly veiled attempt to impose the teaching of religion in school.

Four days before the November 8 vote, a six-week trial came to a close in a lawsuit filed in federal court against the Dover school board’s October 2004 decision to mandate the teaching of “in-

telligent design.” The judge is expected to issue his decision by early January. The suit, brought by 11 parents in the area, asked the court to strike down the board’s ruling as a violation of the separation of church and state codified in the U.S. Constitution. The board had voted last year to require students in ninth grade biology classes to be told that evolution “is not a fact,” and that “intelligent design” is an alternative they should study, including by going to the school library and reading *Of Pandas and People*, an anti-evolutionary tract published by proponents of the cryptoreligious credo.

Proponents of the anti-scientific dogma are waging a battle against evolution in 20 states, including Kansas.

On November 8, the Kansas Board of Education voted by a 6 to 4 margin that students in that state should be taught there are doubts about evolution’s scientific standing. The new standards, which take effect in 2008, advise teachers to explain that aspects of Darwin’s evolutionary theory are controversial and lack “adequate natural explanations for the genetic code.”

THE MILITANT

Unrest by workers of African descent



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U.S. spy planes target Iran

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Two U.S. “drones”—pilotless spy planes—have crashed inside Iran in recent months, according to the Iranian government. The *Washington Post* reports that the Pentagon has not denied the claims.

The small aircraft, sometimes flying only a few hundred feet above ground, employ radar, video, still photography, and air filters against their targets. In addition to their intimidating effect, they are commonly used to detect anti-aircraft positions in preparation for aerial attacks.

According to the Iranian government, a Shadow 200 (RQ-7) drone crashed 37 miles inside Iran in Ilam Province July 4. On August 25, a U.S. Hermes drone went down 125 miles inside Iran near the western city of Khorramabad.

Tehran protested both incidents in letters sent to Washington in August and September through Swiss channels, as the U.S. government refuses normal diplomatic relations with Iran. On November 7, the United Nations Security Council circulated the letters more broadly, following a request by Tehran. The letters called the use of the spy flights “unlawful” and in violation of Iran’s “sovereignty and territorial integrity.”

The *Post* reported November 8 that “The Pentagon did not deny the incidents but said it could not verify the Iranian claims. ‘I can’t confirm the validity of their statements,’ said Defense Department spokesman Maj. Todd Vician.” In its February 13 issue, the *Post* had reported that U.S. offi-

cials acknowledged Washington used drones over northern and western Iran beginning in April 2004, making use of the U.S. occupation of neighboring Iraq to deploy them.

U.S. ambassador to the UN John Bolton told the *Post*, “That’s not in my bailiwick. I’m just a catcher’s mitt here as far as Iran is concerned. I really can’t comment.”

Meanwhile, Reuters reported November 11 that London, Paris, and Berlin had prepared a new proposal, as part of an ongoing campaign driven by Washington to press Iran to abandon development of its own nuclear power industry. The European Union Three, as they are often referred to by the media, will demand that Tehran conduct all uranium enrichment in Russia in exchange for being allowed to keep less essential aspects of the production of atomic fuel in Iran. If the Iranian government turns down the offer, the EU Three will reportedly recommend to the board of governors of the UN’s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), at its November 24 meeting, that the IAEA refer Tehran to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions.

U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice told the press that such a vote would come “at a time of our choosing.”

Tehran has rejected this latest demand. Following talks with Russian envoy Igor Ivanov, the head of Iran’s nuclear agency, Gholamreza Aghazadeh, told the press November 12, “Iran’s nuclear fuel will be produced inside Iran.”

600 Australian cops conduct sweeping ‘anti-terrorist’ raids

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—In the largest “anti-terror” raids in Australian history, 600 armed cops swooped down on 22 homes in several largely immigrant working-class suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney November 8. Seventeen men were arrested for alleged terrorism offences. New South Wales Police Commissioner Ken Moroney told ABC radio the massive operation had “disrupted...the final stages of a large scale terrorist attack...here in Australia.”

“Holy War on Australia,” was the headline of the November 9 *Daily Telegraph*. Coverage in most media was marked by similar sensationalism and nationalism.

The raids were carried out as the conservative government of Prime Minister John Howard was seeking parliamentary and public backing for its “anti-terror” legislation and for new anti-union laws that have generated widespread opposition.

Nine men were arrested in Melbourne and eight in Sydney. One man in Sydney was shot and wounded in the neck after an alleged shootout with cops before being detained. Another Sydney man was arrested days later. More arrests are expected.

One of those arrested in Melbourne was Muslim cleric Abu Bakr. An Algerian-born Australian citizen, Bakr has lived there since 1989. He has publicly called Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden a “great man” and leads a radical Islamic group.

The raids came after 16 months of

spying and cop wiretaps. Materials seized reportedly included firearms, travel documents, computers, and backpacks.

Three days later, Sheik Taj Din al-Hilali spoke in Arabic and English at the large Lakemba mosque in southwest Sydney. Expressing concern for “the nation’s security,” he said the “disproportionate, exaggerated” force of the raids reminded many Muslim immigrants of “dictatorial countries” they had left. “Breaking down the doors...with rifles aimed at people with lights attached to them, handcuffing people,” al-Hilali said, “are acts against civilians” that are “driven by racists.”

Only days earlier, citing urgent “operational” considerations, Howard had secured multiparty backing from opposition Labor, Democrat, and Green members of parliament for a highly publicized amendment to existing laws. It changed the wording from “the terrorist act” to “a terrorist act,” widening the scope for conspiracy-like charges, even before new laws boosting cop powers are passed by parliament.

The joint counterterrorism operation was carried out by the Australian Federal Police (AFP), state cops from Victoria and New South Wales, and agents from the Australian Security Intelligence Organization. The same week the AFP, also involved in counterterrorism operations abroad in the region, aided the Indonesian police in shooting to death alleged Bali bomb maker Asahari Husin.

Crees protest water contamination at Kashechewan reserve in Canada



Canadian Press

TORONTO—In face of protests by Crees on the Kashechewan Reservation on James Bay 500 miles north of Toronto, the Ontario government decided October 27 to evacuate up to 1,100 of the reserve’s 1,900 residents, and the federal government issued a pledge to relocate the reserve and build a new water treatment plant. The old one had been built downstream from sewage lagoons, which contaminated the water supply, including with the potentially deadly e-coli disease. Hundreds of residents became ill from the water. This problem is not confined to Kashechewan. In Ontario alone, 39 Native reservations are under a boil water alert.

—BEVERLY BERNARDO

UK Parliament doubles time ‘terror’ suspects can be held without charges

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—The British Parliament passed a new “anti-terror” law November 9, doubling to 28 days the time cops may detain individuals without charges. This is longer than most other imperialist countries. In France and Spain the limit is 72 hours, Germany 48 hours, and Australia one week.

The new law includes thought-control measures. Individuals deemed to be “glorifying, exalting or celebrating any terrorist act” can now face up to five years in prison. Groups accused of doing so could be banned. Publishing, distributing or selling literature “encouraging” terrorism will carry a maximum seven-year term.

A new offence of acts preparatory to terrorism has been added that carries a maximum of life imprisonment. Offering training or attending a training camp will carry a maximum of 10 years in jail. Those charged under the new law may be prosecuted in British courts even if the alleged acts have been committed abroad.

The government of Prime Minister Anthony Blair pressed, with backing from the cops, to extend the maximum detention without charges to 90 days. This was defeated—the first time the government has lost a parliamentary vote since its election in 1997.

An editorial in the *Financial Times* criticised Blair for using the fact that police officials supported the 90-day measure to pressure MPs (members of Parliament) to vote for it. “A similar argument was made for internment in Northern Ireland in the 1970s,” the big-business daily argued, “a policy that failed to end the violence and fueled republican discontent.”

In a reflection of growing factionalism in bourgeois politics, a scuffle broke out in Parliament between two MPs within the Labour Party, one an opponent and the other a supporter of the 90-day extension, the *Times* reported. Opposition Tory leader Michael Howard called on Blair to resign, claiming he has “diminished” authority.

The government is now pushing to cut weekly incapacity benefits for those too sick to work from £76 to £56, and privatize some medical services that are currently provided free of charge by the National Health Services.

High school students in L.A. walk out

BY SETH DELLINGER AND JULIAN SANTANA

LOS ANGELES—“There aren’t enough chairs. For the first week of class I had to stand. Classes are an hour and a half, so a lot of us would sit on the ground,” said Edgar Escobedo, a senior at South Gate High School. He was describing why nearly 500 students walked out of classes, protesting overcrowded conditions that make learning nearly impossible. They demanded more teachers and textbooks.

On November 3, students sat in on the athletic field. Parents joined them in a march the next day. Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) officials said they will address the students’ demands. Meanwhile, many have been labeled “truants” for missing classes, noted freshman Tony Larrave.

“I don’t even have a gym locker,” which is common, Larrave said. “I get tired carrying all of my books around. A lot of us just leave our books at home.” There are only four class periods a day, he added. “I don’t get any science or history.

LAUSD official Olga Quinones said the crisis is due to the enrollment of “333 students who were not anticipated.”

The walkout has had an effect. According to the November 8 daily *Hoy*, seven new teachers have been hired and some textbooks have arrived. “We did it!” said Arnold Gonzalez, a junior who helped build the protest. “Teachers have been asking us what books we need. Our music class had only eight guitars for 40 students, but now they’ll get more. For the first time I have a computer class and I have a computer!”

— ON THE PICKET LINE —

California nurses win victory for improved patient care

SAN FRANCISCO—The California Nurses Association has succeeded in defending an improvement in the ratio of nurses to patients in state medical units. After a year of union protests, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and hospital owners have given up their fight to suspend a 1999 law requiring a ratio of one nurse for each five patients starting this year. The battle began in November 2004 when Schwarzenegger ordered that this change be put off until 2008. In response, thousands of nurses mobilized in highly visible actions, protesting at the governor’s public appearances throughout the state and across the country.

In March of 2005 a Sacramento County Superior Court judge ruled that Schwarzenegger had no authority to suspend the law. The governor, along with the California Hospital Association, responded by appealing this and later court rulings, seeking to have the suspension of the law reinstated. On November 10, Schwarzenegger finally threw in the towel and withdrew his appeal.

—Betsey Stone

After nine-week strike hospital workers ratify contract

SAN FRANCISCO—After nine weeks on the picket lines, 800 hospital workers employed by the California Pacific Medical Center ratified a new contract November 11 by a 97 percent margin. The unionists, members of Service Employees International Union United Health-Care Workers-West, won a 16 percent wage increase over four years, rules that help guarantee the union’s right to organize new members, and

a training fund. Hundreds of workers celebrated their victory with live music, food, and drink in the Mission District here November 13.

—Laura Anderson

Cleaners at UK Parliament walk out in London

LONDON—Cleaners at the Houses of Parliament in London walked out November 9 in their second one-day strike for better wages, sick pay, and holidays. The 140 members of the Transport and General Workers’ Union (TGWU) are demanding a pay increase from £5.20 per hour to £6.70 (£1=US\$1.74), and a holiday increase to 20 days plus statutory public holidays. Most of the workers are immigrants from Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

The TGWU has launched a union recognition campaign for cleaners in the city, targeting employers who use Mitie Cleaning, Empire Services, and other contract agencies. The Parliamentary Authorities have refused to meet with the cleaners to settle their dispute.

On the same day cleaners organized by the Bondgenoten FNV union in Amsterdam and Eindhoven in the Netherlands took to the streets demanding a minimum wage of 10 euros per hour.

—Celia Pugh

Teaching assistants at NYU strike for union recognition

NEW YORK—Teaching assistants at New York University walked out November 9 demanding the university administration negotiate with their union. The 1,000-member Graduate Student Organizing Committee is an affiliate of



Hospital workers in San Francisco celebrate gains won in new contract after strike against California Pacific Medical Center.

United Auto Workers Local 2110. On the first day of the strike hundreds picketed in front of the campus library, which includes administration offices. Pickets have since spread out to a number of

are therefore not considered employees. This reversed an earlier ruling in favor of the collective bargaining rights of students employed by their school.

—Paul Pederson

Northwest cuts Machinists’ pay

Continued from front page
bankruptcy protection, wants to keep just 3,100 workers on its payroll in the Twin Cities and Detroit hubs. In cities like Atlanta, Boston, and Los Angeles some 2,200 workers would become employees of a new subsidiary company called Ground Co. In places such as Philadelphia and Phoenix, the jobs of some 2,500 ground workers would be outsourced to other companies.

Employees remaining at the hubs will face a 9 percent pay cut. Those working for Ground Co. will have their wages reduced by 20 percent. Outsourced workers will see their pay slashed by 40 percent.

At the November 16 bankruptcy court hearing Northwest asked the judge to

impose an immediate 19 percent temporary pay cut on all IAM members until the two sides come up with an agreement.

Meanwhile, the mechanics and cleaners, organized by the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA), who went out on strike in August, and their supporters continue to walk the picket lines here at the airport. They are publicizing a November 19 rally against union-busting.

At a November 7 meeting of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789, three mechanics representing AMFA and two IAM members who are honoring the AMFA picket lines spoke. The local then voted to contribute \$3,000 to aid the strikers.

On a roll to sell over 3,000 subs!

Continued from front page
the international drive a success.”

“Today we sold outside a hall where poultry workers at Foster Farms were meeting,” reported Romina Green

from San Francisco, who participated in a team to Livingston, California, where poultry workers are fighting for a union contract. “We sold 17 subscriptions, 46 single copies, and nine books and pamphlets.” San Francisco has now surpassed its quota and is using the final stretch to do the same as Des Moines.

Los Angeles raised its quota to 200 after a good week. In South Gate, an L.A. suburb where high school students went on strike (see article on page 3), 15 people subscribed, including students who were part of the protest. L.A. readers also went to Kearny, Arizona, to visit copper workers (see front-page article). “Four subs were sold door-to-door, including to a deceased miners’ wife,” Frank Forrestal said. “When I knocked on the door, her daughter answered and yelled inside. ‘Hey mom, there’s a guy selling a pro-union newspaper. You want it?’ She yelled back, ‘Yes, tell him to come in.’” Two strikers on picket duty subscribed and another at the union hall for a total of 10.

Unionists at the Tyson-owned Lakeside Packers in Brooks, Alberta, hosted a team of *Militant* supporters November 10–13 for house meetings and subbing at shift changes at the giant slaughterhouse. On November 4, workers there won their first union contract after a 23-day strike. Twenty-three workers have signed up for subscriptions since the strike began, more than 100 have bought copies of the paper, and dozens have picked up books and pamphlets on world politics.

\$21,900 to collect in final week of Socialist Workers party-building fund

BY ANGEL LARISCY

NEWARK, New Jersey—With one week to go in the Socialist Workers party-building fund, reports from around the country show we are on course to collect the remaining \$21,900 to meet the \$90,000 national goal. With increases from supporters in Des Moines, Iowa; Miami; Pittsburgh; Price, Utah; and Seattle, the quotas now add up to \$90,157!

Supporters of the fund in Miami turned in \$860 last week by organizing to speak to every single person who had made a pledge.

“People were very interested in activities of the party and the response we are getting nationally to the *Militant* circulation drive and our election campaign in Miami, which has received coverage in the local media,” Bernie Senter said. Contributors expressed appreciation for the reporting teams to the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the participation by SWP leaders in the recent book fair in Equatorial Guinea, he said. Senter added that the number of contributors, 26, is much broader than past efforts.

Sam Manuel spoke November 12 at a fund-raiser in Pittsburgh, on the changed political situation in the United States. A dozen people attended, including workers and students from the University of Pittsburgh. “Our pledges are now \$3,738, exceeding the original \$3,500 quota,” said Ryan Scott. Thirty-three people have pledged to the fund from Western Pennsylvania,

Ohio, and West Virginia.

In Seattle 53 people have pledged or contributed to the fund, reports John Naubert, prompting a second increase in the local quota to \$8,600.

For contributions to be counted in the final chart, money must be received by Tuesday, November 22. Checks or money orders should be made out to SWP and sent to the party’s national office at 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018-2852.

Fall 2005 ‘Militant’ Sub Drive September 17–November 20 Week 8 of 9			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London**	100	94	94%
Edinburgh**	45	39	87%
UK total	145	133	92%
UNITED STATES			
San Francisco*	95	102	107%
Des Moines*	150	155	103%
Birmingham*	75	75	100%
Salt Lake City*	45	45	100%
Twin Cities*	160	153	96%
Los Angeles**	200	183	92%
Newark**	270	243	90%
New York**	450	406	90%
Seattle*	100	88	88%
Price, UT*	80	70	88%
Philadelphia*	125	109	87%
Chicago*	115	98	85%
Washington*	100	85	85%
Boston*	120	100	83%
Pittsburgh*	100	83	83%
Houston*	125	102	82%
Miami*	120	95	79%
Atlanta**	115	84	73%
Detroit*	20	12	60%
U.S. total	2,565	2,288	89%
AUSTRALIA*	45	39	87%
SWEDEN*	35	30	86%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland*	40	34	85%
Christchurch	20	15	75%
N.Z. total	60	49	82%
CANADA*	150	117	78%
ICELAND	22	12	55%
Int’l totals	3,022	2,668	89%
Goal/Should be	3,000	2,666	89%
*raised quota **raised quota more than once			

\$90,000 SWP Party-Building Fund Sept. 11–Nov. 20: Week 9 of 10			
	Pledge	Collected	%
Newark	4,000	3,526	88%
Birmingham*	2,300	1,968	86%
Atlanta*	6,500	5,455	84%
Seattle*	8,600	7,117	83%
Philadelphia*	3,250	2,641	81%
Los Angeles*	9,500	7,660	81%
Miami*	1,850	1,488	80%
Houston	3,500	2,815	80%
Salt Lake City*	1,100	875	80%
New York*	14,000	11,046	79%
Chicago	5,000	3,865	77%
Des Moines*	1,750	1,237	71%
Boston*	3,300	2,312	70%
San Francisco	9,500	6,550	69%
Washington	3,000	2,020	67%
Twin Cities	4,500	2,744	61%
Price, UT*	1,800	1,074	60%
Pittsburgh*	3,800	1,815	48%
Other	2,907	1,907	66%
TOTAL	90,157	68,115	76%
Goal/should be	90,000	81,000	90%
*raised quota			

‘North Country’ highlights fight to end sexual harassment on job

BY DAVID SALNER
AND ILONA GERSH

The film *North Country* is a fictionalized version of the 1996 historic legal victory by women miners against the Eveleth Taconite Co. The first class-action lawsuit against sexual harassment, *Jenson v. Eveleth Mines*, set a precedent for other lawsuits challenging discrimination on the basis of gender.

Well worth seeing, it tells the inspiring story of Lois Jenson—Josie Aimes in the movie. Jenson and other female miners waged a determined fight to defend the right of women to work in the mines without harassment. When she was hired in 1975, the mines were the only good paying jobs in town.

FILM REVIEW

In this 110-mile-long strip of northern Minnesota, the livelihoods of tens of thousands depend on mining taconite, a low-grade iron ore used to make steel. In the late 1970s, there were 1,400 miners at Eveleth Taconite, including 33 women. There were more than 14,000 miners on the Range. Women made up a higher percentage at other mines, including Minntac, the largest mine, where about 400 of 4,000 workers were female.

Bosses were chief culprits

The first part of the movie gives the impression that backward male workers were the chief culprits women in the mines had to fight. This was not the case. The mine bosses were. Women workers were stalked, groped, physically attacked, and threatened. Their privacy was invaded to degrade them. Pornography and vulgarity were pervasive. The film does show the company responsibility for fostering this environment but fails to adequately convey the direct role mine bosses played in encouraging such actions.

Most people would leave the theater after watching *North Country* without an inkling of the great social and labor battles that made it possible for Jenson and other women to get into the mines. Women got these jobs as a result of a broadly supported national drive to win affirmative action—a gain of the civil rights movement. The 1974 consent decree in the basic steel industry (including iron ore) forced the companies to make sure at least 20 percent of new hires were women and Blacks, and to develop apprenticeship programs so these workers could gain skilled jobs.

Inspired by the civil rights revolution and building on the influx of women into the labor force since World War II, supporters of women’s rights marched and rallied for the Equal Rights Amendment. Abortion was decriminalized in 1973.

Then came the 1974–75 recession. It was the first worldwide economic downturn since the 1930s. It brought action by industrial workers and their unions to the forefront. In 1977, coal miners struck for 110 days—one of the most important labor struggles in decades. And that year 14,000 Iron Range miners walked out. Cries of “Solidarity!” shook the Iron Range. At the same time, Ed Sadlowski was running the national Steelworkers Fight Back campaign against what he called the “country club unionism” of the regime of USWA president I.W. Abel. The

Sادلowski campaign swept the Iron Range USWA locals, as well as the giant steel mills. He almost won.

These were the conditions under which women came into the mines. USWA Local 1938 at Minntac formed a women’s committee that won a base for women’s rights among the union membership, including among the men. Women in other locals set up such committees too. Women won a reputation for being good union fighters because their aim was to bring the power of their union behind the women taking on company discrimination. This helped to deepen the sense of solidarity among union members who experienced the 1977 strike and subsequent union struggles on the job.

The bosses tried to push the union back. The Eveleth mine management led efforts to attempt to break the USWA’s support for its women members as a way of weakening the union as a whole. If male unionists could be intimidated into not supporting their union sisters, the companies could begin the process of curbing unionism on the Iron Range.

North Country ends with an explanation of the impact of the victory won by Jenson and the other women miners. Its shortcomings notwithstanding, we hope the film will help inspire a new generation of workers—men and women—to build solidarity with those who stand up against discrimination on the job.

Those interested can also read the book *North Country* is based on, *Class Action: The Story of Lois Jenson and the Landmark Case That Changed Sexual Harassment Law*, by Clara Bingham and Laura Leedy Gansler, Anchor (Oct. 14, 2003). A review of the book was published in the Nov. 25, 2002, *Militant*.

The struggle *North Country* dramatizes has had a lasting impact.

The *Duluth News Tribune*, a daily published in northern Minnesota, reported October 7 that the Northshore Mining Co. recently agreed to pay \$1.3 million to settle a class-action lawsuit



1979 march on Iron Range, Minnesota, for Equal Rights Amendment. Pictured is a contingent of women and men from United Steelworkers Local 1938 at the Minntac mine.

filed in 1999 on behalf of 38 women who presently work at, or were former employees of, the Babbitt, Minnesota, taconite mine. Owned by Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc., which partly owns five other iron ore mines on the Range, including United Taconite, Northshore is the only nonunion mine there. United Taconite is the former Eveleth Taconite Co., where the battle depicted in *North Country* unfolded.

According to the *Tribune*, a news release by the company’s attorneys said Northshore denies any wrongdoing but “agrees that settlement is in the best interests of all parties involved to avoid the risk and distraction of costly and protracted class litigation.”

“This is not a case of sexual harassment,” Joseph Mihalek, the attorney for the plaintiffs, told the *Tribune*. “It’s a case of gender discrimination... related to the company’s practice in regards to promotion, training, job assignments, and overtime.”

Mihalek said “the great majority” of the women involved in the lawsuit still work at Northshore Mining.

David Salner worked at Eveleth Taconite from 1980 to 1982 and was a member of USWA Local 6860. Ilona Gersh worked at the Minntac mine from 1978 to 1981 and was a founding member of the USWA Local 1938 Women’s Committee.

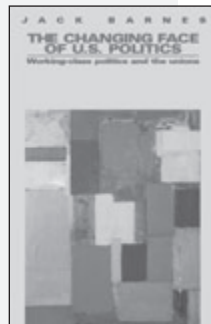
The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

“Jobs in industry are key to women for several reasons. One is that secretaries, teachers, and social workers simply do not have the raw power industrial workers have when it comes to winning women’s rights or anything else.... Opening the doors to basic industry has a powerful impact on the consciousness and self-confidence of women, and on the way men view their female co-workers. Many deeply ingrained attitudes change rapidly. The interconnections between the workers’ struggle against class exploitation and women’s struggle for economic independence and full equality come to life. Sexist prejudices begin to break down.... The fight against sexual harassment is one aspect of the much broader fight of working women—the fight against the harassment of women as a sex, against discrimination, and for the right to get jobs, to hold them, and to have full rights on those jobs.”

—Jack Barnes

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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 28, 1980

Five people were killed and one wounded November 17 in two separate terrorist attacks in the Black Caribbean island nation of Grenada.

The killings took place around 11 p.m. as thirty bullets were pumped into a car near the Pearl’s airport.

Joseph Kanute Burke, Grenadian consul general to North America, spoke to the *Militant* November 19 from Los Angeles. He is on a tour of a number of U.S. cities speaking at public meetings about the revolution in Grenada. Burke said, “The forces behind this ambush are among those who support Eric Gairy. Gairy is sheltered by the U.S. government. His visa was just extended eight weeks ago. He lives in San Diego and is openly raising funds to recruit counterrevolutionaries to attack Grenada.”

The repressive Gairy regime, subversive to Washington and London, was overthrown in March 1979 by revolutionaries of the New Jewel Movement.



November 28, 1955

Nov. 21—The return of Sultan Mohammed ben Youssef to the Moroccan throne marks a signal victory for the national independence movement in North Africa. The Arab masses in Rabat and other Moroccan cities are pressing the struggle for liberation from French imperialist rule with renewed fervor.

In 1953 ben Youssef was ousted by the French government because of his sympathies for Istiqlal, (Moroccan independence party) and replaced by a French puppet. This high-handed action unleashed a mass struggle in Morocco. The central demand has been the return of ben Youssef to the throne.

It reached a crest last August when a general strike went into effect in the Moroccan section of the cities and partisan warfare was stepped up in the mountains.

Over 200,000 Moroccans turned out to greet ben Youssef on his return to the capital city of Rabat.



November 15, 1930

A restlessness and discontentment is permeating the American working class. It is beginning to awaken from the luxurious dream of the prosperity days. It is not only feeling the scourge of unemployment, but the radical lowering of its living standards in a dozen different forms: wage cuts, lengthening of the working day, intensification of labor, “stagger systems” and the like. Directing the hostility at the boss, it also commences to discern behind the capitalist government the hazy figure of the capitalist class. In a word, the premises are present for the development of a clear class consciousness among the workers.

The bureaucracy of the A.F. of L., and its whole conservative machinery, are pillars of American imperialism—more visible today than ever. Without them, the security of the ruling class would be considerably diminished. The function of the bureaucracy is to prevent the workers from understanding the class nature of the government.

Rosa Parks: a working-class militant

Below are major excerpts of a talk by Tom Leonard, a veteran leader of the Socialist Workers Party, at a Militant Labor Forum in Houston on November 4. Subheadings are by the Militant.

BY TOM LEONARD

Some of you may recall a headline in the October 30 *Houston Chronicle* that read “Rosa Parks remembered,” followed by the subtitle “The civil rights icon is mourned by thousands in the city where she made history.”

I have no way of knowing how many mourners there are for Rosa Parks, but I suspect there are a lot of others like ourselves who prefer to celebrate the life of this courageous Black woman and daughter of the working people, who dedicated a good part of her life to helping defeat the system of Jim Crow. It was in fact a revolt of revolutionary proportions to fight against the social system of Jim Crow, which was enforced by state laws in the South and was widely practiced in most of the North.

The most truthful and fitting way to look at the life of Rosa Parks is to look at the years she spent working simultaneously as a secretary of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP and also secretary for the Montgomery division of the International Union of Sleeping Car Porters. It’s not surprising that Sleeping Car Porters union members—nationwide—threw themselves into the struggles of the civil rights movement, especially the Montgomery Bus Boycott. To my knowledge it was the only union to do so at the time.

1956 Militant Labor Forum

Not long after the Montgomery Bus Boycott struggle got underway in 1955, I helped build and participate in a Militant Labor Forum in New York City. The forum’s program was to help launch a material aid support campaign for the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott that was in full swing but badly in need of more help at the time. That’s where I got my first taste of the boycott and its origins and the decisive role played by Rosa Parks in getting it off the ground.

It was a very inspiring meeting that occurred near the end of the McCarthyite witch-hunt, which was aimed at weakening the working class. The eruption of the civil rights struggle was a breath of fresh political air after eight years of intense antilabor legal attacks and passage of many antilabor laws like Taft-Hartley by the capitalist government. All these antilabor moves in that epoch of time were initiated by Democratic president Harry Truman when he got Congress to pass the National Security Act in 1947.

The featured speaker at the 1956 forum was E.D. Nixon, who had been a railroad sleeping-car porter for 32 years



Militant/Glova Scott

Tom Leonard speaking at a New York Militant Labor Forum July 16.



AP/Gene Herrick

Rosa Parks (center) is escorted by E.D. Nixon as they arrive at courthouse in Montgomery, Alabama, March 19, 1956, during trial of leaders of bus boycott.

at the time. He was also president of the Montgomery division of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. But Nixon was more than a union member, he was also a founder of the Montgomery and Alabama chapters of the NAACP and was its president at the time of the boycott. He was also a candidate for public office in Montgomery and lost the election by only 97 votes. He was a genuine political doer and fighter for Black rights and the class rights of working people in general. The strategy he was largely responsible for introducing basically meant violating Jim Crow laws in order to get rid of them. This has some real lessons for trade-union militants looking for answers to government legal attacks today. It’s not surprising his house was one of the first to be bombed as the civil rights movement he helped initiate got under way.

Sharing the platform at the forum with Nixon was Farrell Dobbs, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. Dobbs had just returned from Montgomery, where he covered the boycott for the *Militant*. Later, in reporting back his experiences as a reporter, he explained how some of the Black boycott leaders he interviewed were dubious about talking to him at first because they couldn’t see why a white reporter would be visiting Alabama to write about the then basically Black-led political struggle against Jim Crow. But that suspicion turned to friendship as the *Militant* coverage began to be circulated and Dobbs emerged early on in Montgomery as the one white reporter who wrote the truth about the boycott struggle and the stakes involved.

Dobbs and Nixon had some things in common. Both were fighters for workers rights and trade-union activists. Dobbs was a leader of the Northwest Teamsters union struggles in the 1930s.

Fortunately, the *Militant* is not the only source of facts about Montgomery. I recently was sent a gift of a book titled *Rising from the Rails*, a liberal’s account of the history of the Sleeping Car Porters union. The author, Larry Tye, confirms some factual information about E.D. Nixon I’ve mentioned....

Rosa Parks: a woman of steel

I give this brief background to help counter the distortion of the life of Rosa Parks following her recent death in which she is portrayed as a gentle grandmotherly figure instead of the woman of steel she really was. Rosa Parks was actually one of four Black women arrested for refusing to change their seats on a Montgomery bus in that

time period. But she was picked by E.D. Nixon and other Black leaders to focus their support. That’s why it was E.D. who bailed her out of jail after her arrest for violating Jim Crow law.

Rosa was married and she had no children. She supported her invalid mother by sewing, a skill she learned at Miss White’s Industrial School for Girls. Parks was well-known to Nixon from a dozen years managing his NAACP office as well as the Sleeping Car Porters union offices. She was also well prepared for her decision to refuse to give up her seat on the bus, which included attending a two-week course on “radical desegregation.” And in fact Rosa had been ejected from buses on several previous occasions for refusing to move from her seat.

As the bus boycott and support movement got under way, Farrell Dobbs reported on the struggle’s broad working-class base. He pointed out how many of the cab and automobile drivers who transported boycotters to work were veterans of the Korean War able to stand up to the pressure of the long boycott. It was a mass collective effort that eventually forced the bus company to capitulate. One of the first big victories for the renewed civil rights movement. These were the workers who carpooled Black workers to and from their jobs during the long boycott, running their cars, trucks, and Black-operated taxis.

I was a supporter of the boycott, which included efforts by Socialist Workers Party members to get cars, tires, and other auto parts sent to Montgomery, all of which were really needed to maintain the boycott. If you go back to the *Militant* of that period you will find a picture of Farrell Dobbs getting ready to drive a station wagon to Montgomery that was donated to the boycott from Detroit.

As for E.D. Nixon, he said he raised more than \$400,000 in meetings around the country for the same purpose.

And yet today representatives of the capitalist state, which allowed the Jim Crow system to grow and flourish—from the defeat of Reconstruction following the U.S. Civil War until it was overthrown by the rise of the civil rights movement some 70 years later—are now rewriting history to strip the revolutionary content out of Rosa’s lifetime struggle for Black rights and claim her as a beneficial contributor to life under capitalism.

In this regard, I was personally purely disgusted when Condoleezza Rice claimed that Rosa Parks’s contribution to the struggle for civil rights inspired her success as a capitalist politician and

U.S. imperialism’s secretary of state. She was echoed in delivering this message by other well-to-do Blacks who are a very small part of the Black population. But there were also a sprinkling of prominent white capitalist politicians who delivered basically the same message while attending services for Rosa Parks who was 92 at the time of her death. Figures like U.S. senator Hillary Rodham Clinton looking for future votes, and her husband Bill Clinton, who masquerades as a champion of Black rights, but who while U.S. president intensified the attacks on the poor and working poor, which came down hardest on Blacks, by pushing for adoption of the 1996 welfare reform bill. These were some of the more dishonest reports about Rosa Parks that make her a weak icon, instead of defending her militant heritage in the struggles of the civil rights movement.

First and foremost, during the early days of struggle she was solidly linked to the emancipation of all Black people, especially the poorest of the poor she came from and was part of, a struggle that is far from completed today, and will never be completed as long as we live under the yoke of capitalist exploitation.

I’ve included some remarks about E.D. Nixon in this talk—including the importance of veterans and experienced union militants—to give you an idea of the kind of fighters Rosa Parks worked with during her active participation in the civil rights movement of the 1950s. It helps tell who she really was.

A shameful distortion of history

The decision of most of the capitalist press and news media to downplay the courage and determination of Rosa Parks and the other fighters who were predominately working farmers or working people, as she was, is a shameful distortion of history. In fact, those were the very fighters who risked all to help defeat Jim Crow. This is the main reason we should celebrate Rosa’s life.

I’ve included remarks about E.D. Nixon because he was the architect of the Montgomery boycott and responsible for getting Martin Luther King elected to the presidency of the Montgomery Improvement Association, which led the boycott to a successful conclusion.

Union Pullman car porters across the country promoted anti-lynching campaigns, helped plan the first “freedom rides,” and spearheaded the massive 1963 civil rights march on Washington. They put up their money and turned over their union halls for meetings, as well as sharing their experiences in the class struggle, which included strikes against the Pullman Company.

Not many people remember those experiences in the rise of the civil rights struggle, but it’s useful to recall them at special moments in history—like the death of Rosa Parks, who worked for years as a secretary for the Pullman car porters union division in Montgomery.

I think it’s fitting to end my remarks with this quote from E.D., as he was called by his fellow sleeping car porters, because it helps put Rosa Parks’s life in the proper perspective.

Some years after the boycott ended E.D. is quoted as saying, “I was on an airplane coming down from New York some time ago, sitting beside a lady, and she asked me who I was,” Nixon recalled. “I told her. She said, ‘Oh,

Continued on next page

E.D. Nixon: organizer of Montgomery bus boycott

The following are major excerpts from an article published in the Dec. 20, 1965, Militant under the headline, "Montgomery Bus Boycott Anniversary: E.D. Nixon Honored at Dinner."

BY HARRY RING

NEW YORK—E.D. Nixon, organizer of the Montgomery bus boycott, was guest of honor here Dec. 11 at a dinner celebrating the tenth anniversary of that historic civil rights struggle. It was sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum.

In addition to Mr. Nixon, the gathering heard Clifton DeBerry, 1964 presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party, and Fred Halstead, staff writer for the *Militant*. Farrell Dobbs, National Secretary of the SWP, was toastmaster. All three had met E.D. Nixon in Montgomery during the bus boycott.

Messages were received from friends and co-workers of E.D. Nixon, including one from rights fighters Carl and Anne Braden....

Mrs. Prathia Wynn, staff member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, attended as a representative of that organization. Outstanding entertainment was provided by Bill Fredericks, a young folk singer, and E.D. Nixon Jr., a professional singer and actor.

Fredericks sang a song he composed about the civil rights struggle based on the cry heard during the Watts outbreak, "Burn, Baby, Burn." E.D. Nixon Jr., who recently appeared in the hit production "The Blacks" and is in the Sammy Davis movie now in production, "A Man Called Adam," sang songs about the freedom movement.

The gathering gave a rousing ovation to Mrs. E.D. Nixon. In his speech, E. D. Nixon said of her: "She stood behind me year after year and has done a tremendous job." When their home was bombed during the boycott, he said, her response was: "We're not going to let that scare us. We can't quit." He recalled that on an earlier occasion when his life was threatened by racists and he suggested she go out of town, she replied: "I'm not going anywhere, I don't believe they're coming, but they may. I'd rather be the widow of a man that had the courage to fight than be the wife of a coward."

Farrell Dobbs paid tribute to E.D. Nixon as "a pioneer leader in the freedom struggle in the South."

He told the audience: "This weekend in Montgomery, the tenth anniversary of

the boycott is being celebrated. But unfortunately Mr. Nixon was not included in the program. We of the Militant Labor Forum felt that he should be included, that he before all others should be recognized as the pioneer, the founding leader, the Initiator, the spark plug and principal man of the hour in the battle."

Dobbs also informed the gathering that both the Montgomery morning *Advertiser* and evening *Journal* had reported that the Militant Labor Forum would pay tribute to Mr. Nixon.

Dobbs then read the biographical data on E.D. Nixon in the *Who's Who in the South and Southwest*. It described him as "a civic leader and Pullman porter." He was president of the Montgomery division of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters since 1938. With a marvelous piece of understatement, the book describes how he "secured a revision of the physical arrangements of the railroad station ticket office."

It adds that he organized the Montgomery Voters League and was instrumental in getting Negroes registered to vote. He was president of the Montgomery NAACP from 1947 to 1951 and president of its state organization until 1952. He was, in 1954, the first Negro to run for public office in Montgomery. He has been a member of the board of directors of the Southern Conference Educational Fund since 1952. And, the report states, he "organized Montgomery Improvement Association in 1955 to protest treatment of Negroes on city buses."

Fred Halstead described how he had gone to Montgomery in March 1956 to do a story on the boycott movement that had begun Dec. 5, 1955....

On his arrival in Montgomery Halstead found the Negro community close mouthed with an unknown Northern white. He finally found a local white man who could open the doors for him. It was novelist Alfred Maund, then on the staff of the late Aubrey William's publication, the *Southern Farmer*, which was published in Montgomery.

The Originator

After discussion, Maund said, "I'll take you to the man who started the whole thing," and took him to the home of E. D. Nixon for an interview.

Halstead quoted from the *Black Worker*, voice of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, on the occasion of Nixon's retirement last year. The paper wrote:

"It must be said that the Rev. Martin Luther King may never have been given the Nobel Peace Award if it were not for the fact that Brother Nixon induced Rev. King to take the leadership of the Montgomery Improvement Association, which ultimately was successful in abolishing discrimination in bus transportation."

Clifton DeBerry gave an excellent summary of the principal achievements of the boycott movement....

The high point of the evening was the speech by E.D. Nixon. A sturdy, stern looking man, his face relaxes as he indulges in his liking for a joke or humorous side remark. His simply worded speech warmed the hearts of the old timers present and was particularly inspiring to the young people. Many of them were hearing for the first time the kind of an



Militant/Finer

E.D. Nixon (center) speaks at Militant Labor Forum in New York Dec. 11, 1965, on 10th anniversary of Montgomery Bus Boycott. At right is Farrell Dobbs, then national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. At left is E.D. Nixon's wife, Arlet Nixon.

authentic spokesman who emerges from the ranks of a working class movement.

Emphasizing that the Montgomery Improvement Association, which was organized to lead the boycott movement, was the outgrowth of many previous struggles in the city, he described the organizations he had participated in and led prior to the MIA.

"So you see," he commented, "the Montgomery Improvement Association was not started just because someone came to town or someone felt it was the proper thing to do at this time. It was started because there had been a struggle of people for long years."

He told how Rosa Parks had been the third person to be arrested for defying bus Jim Crow but he felt she was the first one who could be relied on for a test case. She had been his secretary in the NAACP and other organizations, he recalled, over a period of 12 years.

Describing how he organized the meeting to establish the protest movement, he said: "The first person I called was the Rev. Ralph Abernathy. He said, 'I believe you have the right idea. I'll go along.'"

The second person he called was Rev. H.H. Hubbard who said, "Yes, I'll go along with it."

"The third person I called," he continued, "was the Rev. M.L. King and he said to me, 'Well Nixon, I don't know. Let me think about it for a while.' So, to make a long story short, I called 15 other people, and I gave Rev. King time to pray over it or whatever he wanted to do. And I called him back and he was number 18 on my list and he agreed to go along with us."

On Dec. 5 Rosa Parks was convicted and fined \$10. At that point, Nixon declared, "50,000 Negroes rose up and grabbed the 'Cradle of the Confederacy' and began to rock it!"

But on the very day of the first mass meeting many of the ministers were still reluctant to make the fight. "I almost lost patience with them," Nixon said. "I told them what I thought about them and told them 'Unless you accept this program this evening, there'll be more than 1,000 people at the church tonight. I'll take the microphone and tell the people that we don't have a program because you all are too cowardly to stand on your feet and fight.' So then they all decided to go along."

More than 4,500 people turned out for the mass meeting. The MIA was established. A car pool was organized that provided transportation for the entire Negro community for a full year while the boycott held fast despite bombings of Nixon's and King's homes and wholesale arrests of boycott leaders.

Nixon described the impressive support the boycott movement won throughout the country. While he was treasurer of the MIA during the boycott period, he said, he accounted for income and expenditures of \$415,000, all of it contributions from organizations and individuals.

'Many People Came'

"Many people came to Montgomery," he said. "People came from here—that was where I happened to meet the master of ceremonies here [Dobbs.] He came to my house and we had a long talk. We had station wagons and automobiles that were given to us. And the number one station wagon came from the master of ceremonies here tonight in the name of his organization."

Nixon continued: "The tenth anniversary of the Montgomery Improvement Association is also being celebrated in my home town. It is being celebrated by people who I spent more than 25 years trying to service prior to the MIA."

"But as you know," he continued, "in every organization there are people who get carried away by big words. There are sometimes people who get carried away by how the words are said. But I would say to you that there are two things that are important in dealing with organizations. One of them is not how much you say but how much you do. The other thing is not just to say things but to tell the truth about the things you deal with. And that's what I have tried to contribute to the Montgomery Improvement Association and to any other organization I have dealt with."

"Consequently," he added, "in doing that I sometimes have to stand by myself. But if telling the truth makes me stand alone, then I'm a lone stander throughout my life."

Pointing to the surge of the Southern movement, he concluded: "I once told a tale about a young man who had a basket full of puppies. He was going down the street trying to sell them and he stopped at a lady's house and asked her, 'Madam, would you like to have a puppy?' She asked, 'How much are they?' 'Twenty-five cents.' She looked at them and said, 'They beautiful, but no. I reckon not.'

"So he went home and the next morning the woman called and said, 'Son, have you got any more of those puppies?' 'Yes, mmm.' She said, 'How much did you say they are?' 'Fifty cents.' She said, 'Why are they 50 cents today when yesterday you said they were a quarter?' He said, 'Their eyes are open.'

"So the gist of the story is the Negro in the South will not be sold for a quarter anymore. His eyes are open."

Rosa Parks

Continued from previous page

you're down in Montgomery. Lord I don't know what would have happened to the Black people if Rev. King hadn't went to town." I replied, "If Mrs. Parks had got up and given that white man her seat [on the bus], you'd never of heard of Rev. King."

I think those remarks help place Rosa Parks properly in history.

As for E.D. Nixon, one of my favorite recollections of him...was his willingness to speak at the New York Militant Labor Forum in a period when the impact of the rabidly anticommunist McCarthyite witch-hunt was still being felt.

Thank you!

Atlanta event: Africa and fight to transform world

BY SUSAN LAMONT

ATLANTA—“We start with the world and how to transform it” was the theme of a well-attended meeting held here November 12 at Spelman College. It was the first of four events around the country featuring participants in the first Equatorial Guinea book fair, which took place in that Central African country October 17–20.

Some 90 workers and students came from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Texas to attend the event, sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists. They heard four members of a team that had taken part in the fair and staffed the Pathfinder Press table there.

Half a dozen Spelman students were in the audience. A group of students met with Waters at an informal reception before the program.

“The book fair presented us with an opportunity to learn more about the history of that part of Africa,” Arrin Hawkins told the audience. “The capital Malabo on the island of Bioko was used by the Portuguese, Dutch, British, and Spanish colonial powers, including as a staging ground for the transatlantic slave trade.

“Guineans explained to us that their history is not a remote past. That colonial heritage continues to shape the country through the ongoing imperialist oppression. We have to see history as part of the present.”

Martín Koppel noted the pride and confidence of the contingents of Guinean workers who marched in the October 12 Independence Day celebrations. “You could see the future that’s coming” with the birth of a working class in Equatorial Guinea, being brought into being through the development of the oil industry and associated infrastructure.

He described revolutionary Cuba’s role in providing doctors and other volunteers in Equatorial Guinea. “While the imperialist powers rob doctors from Africa, Cuba is helping Equatorial Guinea build up its own health services,” training Guinean youth as doctors, Koppel said.

Brian Taylor described how youth at the book fair sought out titles by Nelson Mandela. “We could see how the



Militant/Dave Wulp

Some 90 people attended meeting in Atlanta on first book fair in Equatorial Guinea. Chairperson James Harris is at podium. Speakers who took part in trip were (seated, from left) Arrin Hawkins, Mary-Alice Waters, Brian Taylor, and Martín Koppel.

revolution in South Africa to overthrow apartheid is a source of inspiration for Equatorial Guineans,” he said. He added there was a similar response to speeches by Thomas Sankara, leader of the Burkina Faso revolution in the 1980s: “We couldn’t bring enough of these titles!” And fair organizers said they were pleasantly surprised by the thirst for books by Malcolm X.

“What we saw was not the image most of those who live in the imperialist countries have of Africa,” said Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New International* magazine and the main speaker. “Instead, we saw the human beings—fighting, toiling humanity—working under difficult conditions, but those who are going to be making their own future.”

Waters noted that the *Communist Manifesto* “speaks to what we saw and experienced in Equatorial Guinea.” It explains that the “need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe.” Now, she said, Equatorial Guinea—one of the countries most underdeveloped by imperialism—has become the third-largest oil exporter in

Africa, as U.S. companies tap the huge oil reserves in the Gulf of Guinea.

The developing class contradictions in Equatorial Guinea are so historically new, so close to the surface, that they are easier to see there than in many other places, Waters explained. That is also true of the historical trends strengthening the working class on an international scale—from the expansion and internationalization of the working class to the increased role of women, to the declining hold of religious beliefs.

“What about the role of the Spanish language in Equatorial Guinea?” asked one person in the audience during the question-and-answer period.

Equatorial Guinea was a colony of Spain until 1968. “The language of education in Equatorial Guinea remains Spanish,” Waters explained. “The indigenous languages, such as Fang and Bubi, are not written languages.” Thomas Sankara, she said, explained that in Burkina Faso in West Africa, while French was the language imposed by the former colonial power, it also served as a tool for the Burkinabé people to communicate with each other

and with fighters against imperialism the world over.

Other questions and answers took up the role of African immigrants in the imperialist countries, the legacy of colonialist-fostered divisions within Equatorial Guinea, and the record of Cuban internationalist solidarity in the world, among other questions.

Audience members contributed \$945 to help defray the travel and other costs of attending the book fair.

Many participants spoke about how much they appreciated what they had learned at the event. The meeting “helped open my eyes to a lot of things I’ve never thought much about before,” said Spelman senior Rheaclare Fraser, following the meeting.

Ben Downing, 22, who attends the University of Houston, said he was especially interested to learn about the role of Cuba in Africa.

“I thought the meeting was fantastic,” said Gladys Williams, 58. Active in the People’s Tribunal, a group in southern Georgia that has led fights against police brutality, Williams was happy to hear that Cuban leader Víctor Dreke was now Cuba’s ambassador to Equatorial Guinea and that he had spoken at the book fair. Three years ago Williams helped host a visit by Dreke to farm communities in her area as part of a speaking tour.

On Sunday morning, 50 people attended a brunch at the Javaology coffee shop, where discussion with the speakers from the night before continued for several hours. “I came to find out more about Africa and why they need these books!” said Katina McFadden, 29, an Atlanta meat packer, as she looked at the display of photos from the book fair. People also saw a short video about the visit to Equatorial Guinea.

Maurice Williams contributed to this article.

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‘We Start with the World and How To Transform It’
Report from First
Equatorial Guinea Book Fair

Speakers: Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, and Arrin Hawkins, Martín Koppel, and Brian Taylor, participants in First Equatorial Guinea Book Fair

SAN FRANCISCO: meeting Nov. 19, brunch Nov. 20

ST. PAUL, MN: meeting Dec. 3, brunch Dec. 4

NEW YORK CITY: meeting Dec. 10, brunch Dec. 11

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Labor solidarity begins on picket line

Labor solidarity, which begins with militancy on the picket line and is extended with the active support from other working people, is the key to victory. That’s confirmed by three recent wins for the working class and its allies:

- Copper workers in Arizona and Texas, organized by several unions, kept up a solid front against Asarco, the copper mining giant, and pushed back the company’s concession demands.
- At Lakeside Packers, Canada’s largest slaughterhouse, pickets held firm in face of company-organized violence and directed their appeal at the entire workforce, succeeding in winning line-crossers over to the strike. The scab-herding Tyson bosses were forced to sign their first contract since the union was decertified in the 1980s.
- In California, after a year-long campaign that included picket lines, street protests, and labor outreach, the nurses’ association forced the governor and hospital bosses to drop their effort to roll back the patient-nurse ratio established in a 1999 law.

The *Wall Street Journal*, a faithful voice of the employers, took note, with concern, of an increase in strikes this year.

Labor solidarity is not the banner of all working-class battles, however. Since August 19, striking mechanics, custodians, and cleaners organized by the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association at Northwest Airlines have held the breach against the company’s drive to tear up union contracts, lay off thousands, and force the rest to work faster and with slashed wages and benefits.

The stakes in this battle couldn’t be higher for all airline workers and the entire labor movement. A number of Machinists and flight attendants have set an example by honoring the picket lines of their fellow workers. The top officialdom of the Machinists and other unions at Northwest, however, has told their members not to honor the picket lines. Now the Northwest bosses have blood in their mouth. They are targeting Machinists, flight attendants, and every other section of the workforce for sweeping cuts in jobs, wages, and benefits.

The entire working class needs to stand with the strikers at Northwest. Join their picket lines. Don’t fly Northwest. Donate to the strike and get the word around about it. This battle is living proof for all labor that an injury to one is, indeed, an injury to all.

Copper strikers beat back concessions

Continued from front page

2006. Although the unions did not win a new contract, miners explained that the agreement shows the miners were strong enough to prevent across-the-board concessions. At the same time, workers said they realize they may be back on the picket lines next year.

“We conducted a disciplined strike and are proud of what we accomplished,” said Tony Pizano, a member of USW Local 915 and union veteran for 28 years. “There were no unnecessary firings and, after months of stalling, we forced the company to agree to a successorship clause that requires any buyer of Asarco to recognize the union.” This clause was the major sticking point in negotiations until recently. Former Asarco chief executive officer Daniel Tellechea argued that such a clause would diminish the company’s market value. Days before the settlement Tellechea resigned as CEO. His hardball stance became an obstacle in the eyes of Asarco’s creditors.

On November 14, a bankruptcy court in Corpus Christi, Texas, approved the settlement. Asarco had filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection there shortly after the strike began.

With copper prices at record levels of about \$2 per pound, 50 cents higher than when workers walked out, Asarco has been losing ground to Phelps Dodge, its main competitor and the largest U.S. copper producer. In the first nine months of this year, Phelps Dodge’s net income reached \$1.4 billion, roughly double that of the same period in 2004. Phelps Dodge bosses broke the unions in a 1983 strike with the aid of state authorities,

who sent in the National Guard to help herd scabs into the mines.

The unions also forced Asarco to resume payment of both long- and short-term disability payments to former employees and surviving spouses, according to *The Rumble in Copper*, a union newsletter. Asarco had used its bankruptcy status to halt payments to 117 workers, many of whom are out of work due to on-the-job injuries.

The copper giant got a black eye October 6 when the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued a formal complaint against the company, charging Asarco with violations of labor law related to “the withholding of accrued vacation benefits, interrogation of union workers and surveillance of union activities,” the *Arizona Daily Star* reported. “We found the violations were serious enough to have provoked the strike,” the NLRB director in Phoenix told the media.

No love is lost between the town of Kearny and Asarco, either. The *Copper Basin News*, a local daily, reported November 9 that Asarco has used bankruptcy laws to skirt paying property taxes to the town for the second time in three years.

During the four-month walkout, thousands of working people in the surrounding copper towns backed the striking workers. Strikers who had to take jobs elsewhere are streaming back to their jobs in the mines. The mood here is upbeat as the union and its supporters prepare for the next stage of the struggle.

Dean Hazlewood contributed to this article.

Paris clamps down

Continued from front page

ized gatherings. At the height of the unrest, street actions had spread to 300 cities and towns across France. Over 8,000 vehicles were burned and a number of businesses destroyed. But “there is no evidence that the unrest is coalescing into a broader political movement,” noted an article in the November 5 *International Herald Tribune*.

The state of emergency is based on a 1955 law used against Algerians fighting for independence from French colonial rule. The French government last used it inside the country in 1961 to suppress protests by Algerians in the Paris region. Under this measure, local authorities in 25 of the country’s 96 departments are authorized to institute nightly curfews against youth unaccompanied by adults. Only in the Madeleine neighborhood of Evreux, outside Paris, is the curfew being applied to all residents. Mayors in 40 towns in six of these departments have imposed curfews. The cops there can ban public meetings, carry out house searches at any time, and haul off to jail or place under house arrest those accused of violating this regulation.

In La Courneuve, a northern suburb of Paris, a French television crew filmed cops severely beating a young protester November 7 while hurling racist epithets. In an effort to contain the outrage the broadcasting of this incident caused, authorities suspended eight cops, indicted five, and jailed one for a few days. The brutalized youth, however, has since been jailed.

As of November 16, the cops had arrested over 2,800 people, the majority French citizens. Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy said deportations would begin of some “foreigners” convicted of participating in the unrest, including those with residency papers.

The SOS-Racisme group has filed a complaint with the Council of State, challenging this move. French foreign minister Philippe Douste-Blazy told Europe-1 radio he opposes deporting those with proper immigration papers. Meanwhile, Jean-Paul Garaud, a member of parliament from the ruling Union for a Popular Movement, announced plans to introduce legislation to give courts the power to “take away French nationality” from naturalized citizens arrested for being involved in the protests, the daily *Le Monde* reported.

Fueling the unrest is the dismal prospect for jobs, especially those that pay a decent wage, for youth whose families have emigrated to France from its former colonies in Africa. According to a study published by the French national statistics office, Insee, the jobless rate among French-born children of immigrants aged 19 to 29 is 30 percent, more than three times the national average. For those under 25 years old, unemployment last year was 36 percent.

Derek Jeffers from Paris contributed to this article.

Caracas book fair

Continued from front page

Cuban instructors helped train Venezuelan volunteers to teach peasants, fishermen, workers, and others to read and write. In the last two years, the literacy efforts have been expanded with Mission Ribas and Mission Sucre, which aim, respectively, to aid millions to get a high school diploma and to obtain vocational or pre-university training.

For the first time this year the fair will travel to nine other Venezuelan states after the nine-day stint in Caracas, offering books at low cost to many.

“Traditionally, governments prevent people from getting an education, because they are afraid of a mass of thinking people,” said Emma Cesin Centeno, vice minister of cultural development.

Entrance to the book fair is free of charge. Many working-class families and youth are visiting the park where it is held. In addition to book exhibits, daily activities include poetry readings, musical performances, book presentations, and forums.

Participating writers and other literary figures include Esteban Emilio Mosonyi, María Flores, Antonio Acosta Márquez, and others from Venezuela; Mexican writer Paco Ignacio Taibo; Esmeralda Brown, a Panamanian who lives in the United States; Pedro Antonio Valdés of the Dominican Republic; and Nancy Morejón, Jorge Timossi, Aleida Guevara, Armando Hart, and Iroel Sánchez of Cuba.

For the second year in a row Pathfinder Press from the United States has a booth at the fair.

LETTERS

Airline workers’ website

I run a website promoting the employees fight against Northwest Airlines. Its address is www.airlineemployeesagainstconcessions.org. It is now up and running. Feel free to check it out and any help in getting the word out would be appreciated. Your paper is a fundamental tool to promote the fights of the unionized workforce. Keep up the good work. I look forward to being informed of all employees plights. With your help, the labor industry will succeed.
Rebecca
by e-mail

mouthpieces... is not that they are immoral, hypocritical people as individuals. The scandal mongering is fueled largely by the far right and the left within bourgeois politics to profit from middle-class insecurities and drag workers along with the declining bourgeoisie itself down into the pit of resentment and salacious envy.” That’s quite a mouthful. I would love to see it expanded into an article. Meanwhile, references to past articles would be helpful.
David Segal
New York, New York

Thanks. We’ll try to find a way to return to the subject. In the meantime, you could look up the relevant section, under the subheading “Pornographication of politics,” of “Imperialism’s March Toward Fascism and War” by Jack Barnes in

New International *no. 10* (p. 289). You may also find useful the article in the Sept. 28, 1998, *Militant*, on Clinton’s impeachment.

—Editor

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